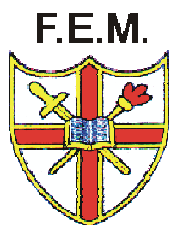


Sounding the Trumpet

October - December 2012



Jesus is at the Door!

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:14-22).

It is interesting that verse 20 of our text, **“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me”**, is often quoted in reference to the lost. The intended meaning is that Christ is knocking on their hearts asking to come in. But such an interpretation is a gross misapplication of Scripture.

These words of Christ are spoken to the church of the Laodiceans, one of the seven mentioned in the Book of Revelation, which was located in Asia Minor. The members of this church, along with the others, were Christians who were washed in the blood of Christ, **“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”** (Revelation 1:6). Though they were saved, they were in a deplorable spiritual condition; therefore the Lord reprimanded them for their lukewarmness, shallowness and ungodliness. They were hot towards sin but cold towards God.

Such lukewarmness is in evidence in the majority of churches in our land today. Few Christians have the conviction to openly acknowledge the Lord but have no difficulty living like the world. Some are frightened to stand up and be counted alongside true followers of Christ. They are like those in John 12:42-43 who they **“believed on him ... they did not confess him”** lest they were thought off as fanatics who should be avoided. They also **“loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”** Therefore they were lukewarm in their service and love toward the Lord. Such shallow faith makes the Lord sick!

Only a return to zealousness can remedy this, but it must begin with a willingness to receive the rebuke and chastisement God deals out. A lack of repentance at this stage inhibits the work of the Holy Spirit, so no matter how much the Lord may love us, we will be useless to Him without purity and zeal. Like John the Baptist we can be a **“burning and shining light”** for Christ in

our community (John 5:35). Those who are on fire for the Lord have dedicated themselves to glorifying Him in this world.

We must see that our text is not directed to the unsaved but to those who profess to be Christians. If we will accept it, there is something of the Laodicean spirit in all of us. How often we fail to live according to God's standards and do not persevere in our service to Him! How quickly we find ourselves "**departing**" from what we have been taught (1 Timothy 4:1) and even "**falling away**" from the path of righteousness and faith (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The only people that can depart and fall away are those who were once standing in Christ. This is exactly the situation the Laodicean church found itself in, but remember that it was the individual members who were at fault. Each had the choice to serve the Lord or not. If they refused to follow the Lord then they would suffer the consequences and find themselves cast out into outer darkness. Three times Jesus states that "**the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness**" where they will spend eternity "**weeping and gnashing [their] teeth**" (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30). Yet He promises that if any one hears His voice then communion can be restored.

Jesus instructed the members of the church to repent, return and be revived. He counsels them to "**buy**" the precious riches only He can give. This reveals that though salvation is a free gift of God's grace, it is costly to live for Christ. The truth may be free, but it is not cheap. We cannot learn spiritual truth if we are lazy and without zeal, for it must be bought from the Lord through dedication. "**Buy the truth and sell it not**" (Proverbs 23:23). To buy this "**gold tried in the fire**" we must give up our own thoughts, beliefs and ways that are contrary to the truth and exercise faith in believing and obeying the word of God. Therefore we must be "**doers**" rather than just "**hearers**" (James 1:22). In every aspect of our daily lives we ought to adorn "**the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things**" (Titus 2:10). Such truth will enrich our lives and affect others too.

Notice that the Laodicean church had to become clothed in "**white raiment**" again, for they had spoiled their garments through sin. In fact sin had made them naked and impoverished. No one can enter the Kingdom without the robe of righteousness Christ gives. "**And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen**" (Matthew 22:11-14). They were spiritually blind and heading towards damnation. Sadly they were calling others to follow them there. "**If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch**" (Matthew 15:14). They needed to be healed and have their eyes opened. "**That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints**" (Ephesians 1:17-18).

So we see in this text that Christ is not standing at the door of unregenerate people pleading to come into their lives; instead He is knocking on the

church's door. This reveals that the very ones He redeemed have shoved Him out and bolted the door. The church is guilty of keeping Him out so that they can practice their sin without receiving a rebuke. Jesus once asked, **"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"** (Luke 18:8). Lukewarmness is remedied by unquestioning loyalty and obedience to God and His word. It is foolishness for a church, and the individual members of it, to be lukewarm in their service to Christ. He will not permit any of His children to get away with disobedience and outright rebellion. Nevertheless, He still calls each one of us into a deeper and fuller relationship with Him.

Gary Hall

Jacob's Favourite

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours" (Genesis 37:3).

Joseph was loved by Jacob (Israel) more than he loved his other children. Some people in the Bible, take for example Samson, Peter, David etc, were not perfect people. They made their share of mistakes, but one thing that they all had in common was an abundance of faith. Jacob was no different, yes he had his faults, but he was a man of faith.

The big mistake in this story of Joseph

The mistake is on Jacob's part, as he singles out Joseph for special attention. Joseph is the son of his old age, and so is a real blessing to him. Joseph was the first son of Rachel the wife whom he loved dearly. It became clear to his brothers that Joseph was loved more than they!

All children are a blessing

If we start to single out one above the other, if we cast our love towards one more than the others - be careful! We read in Genesis about what happens in this case of sibling rivalry. We should remember that we that love and trust in God are His children. We know that from the scriptures God is no respecter of persons.

In many ways the life of Joseph parallels, to a certain extent, to that of the Lord Jesus. Joseph is, if you like, a 'type' of the Lord Jesus within the Old Testament scriptures. For example, he was humbled and then exalted. Sold for pieces of silver. There are of course the many trials and tribulations that the Christian goes through.

The coat of many colours - The coat of distinction

Think about all the things we have worn over the years. I grew up in the seventies, and fashion was quite different from what it is today. Thinking back to the time of Jacob, you would have imagined that the clothes that they wore, to have been fairly plain, after all we are looking at approximately 4,000 years ago. They didn't have all the technology, the weaving machinery etc that we have today. So what would they have thought when Joseph appears with this coat of many colours? Maybe it was the type of coat they had never seen before. It seems that it would have certainly singled Joseph out from the rest.

This coat would have been a real fashion statement at the time. It was also a statement by Jacob to say, "Joseph is special to me". None of the other brothers received a coat of many colours. You see, you give to one, and the others feel excluded - left out. Also it was the elder brothers who seemingly have been overlooked. Favouritism produced hatred in the rest of Joseph's brethren.

One of the things that we learn from Joseph's character is that through all his trials and tribulations we read of no murmuring or complaining. Through his years imprisoned after being thrown into the pit by his brothers there is no complaint. Through the false accusations, no turning away from God. Just the quiet, faithful belief that God was with him.

Richard Hardy

Bring on the Music

Introduction.

The hills are alive with the sound of music, and the hearts of believers are also filled with music.

PLACE THE MUSIC STARTED

Music fills the courts of heaven as heavenly beings praise our Lord and Creator. When God created the world, the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy (Job 38:7). God created man in His own image, to be an instrument of praise.

PEOPLE WHO MADE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

(Genesis. 4:20) Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Perhaps he made the instruments too, Jubal was there first in Genesis. Prior to modern makers such as Steinway, Schimmil, Bosendorffer, Yamaha and Mason and Hamlin. He gave humans the ability to sing and to make music with musical instruments to complement the voice.

PROCLAMATIONS TO BRING ON THE MUSIC

Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our Feast; this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. (Psalm 81:1-4) Music was an important part of the worship service at the temple. Certain groups of the Levitical tribes were designated as temple musicians and singers, offering their praises to God. David had a real gift of music, providing soothing harp music to King Saul when the king was distraught. Commissioning most of the instruments and songs for the temple services, he also wrote most of the songs in Psalms: the longest book in the Bible. Songs and poetry were also means to improve the memory to help remember significant events or warnings. From the introduction of the harp and flute early in Genesis to the song of the redeemed in God's heavenly city, music fills the Holy Scriptures. May our hearts be filled with music as together we

see what the Bible has to say about music, songs and musical instruments. (Psalm. 150:1-6) Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

PRECIOUS SONG OF THE CROSS OF CALVARY

Jesus is our Saviour who can sing at all times and in the most dangerous of situations. (Matthew 26: 30) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. It was remarkable that He could sing, and it was remarkable that they could sing as the clouds darkened and the cross loomed on Calvary's hill. Believers are brave and special people. As it was then, so it is today. I recently bought an Olive tree at a bargain price from Asda in Leeds, reminder of a visit to the Garden of Gethsemane and the Olive trees there.

PEOPLE CAN HAVE A SYMPHONY IN HEART AND LIFE TODAY

Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Faith can be fun and holiness can be happiness. The abundant life of every Christian is filled with a heavenly melody. The melody that will take us into tomorrow. Yesterday, today and for ever, the song we are singing is a long song. (Ephesians 5: 18-19) We can sing because our sins are forgiven. We have many songs of victory and songs of triumph. In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8: 37-38). (Galatians 5:22-23) In the believers music sheet, the born again believer has many themes including: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. meekness, temperance. These are heavenly values and qualities and they make up a song of life filled with heavenly splendour.

PRAISE TO THE LAMB OF GOD WILL REVERBERATE TO EDGE OF THE COSMOS

One day perhaps sooner than we expect we will hear the Voice of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. It is a beautiful quality it is as the sound of many waters... (Revelation 1-15) Come on bring on the music and choose a theme from your heavenly song sheet.

Frank Rowley

Jonah

4:9 "And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" *Jonah's anger returned once more and when God asked him if he was doing the right thing being angry because of the gourd. "And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death." His old arrogance had returned; it was even worse that before. His "fear" of Jehovah had departed once again, or else he never would have been bold enough to speak to the Almighty in such a way. The*

only thing that we can admire about him in this situation is his frankness. He did not meekly say "no" in answer to the question when he felt so strongly otherwise.

4:10 *"Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:"*

In patience God reasoned with him. You had pity on the gourd, but you never made it grow. It was just a worthless passing thing. It came up in the night, and it perished in a night. Yet you are angry with me because I am not willing to destroy this great city of Nineveh, even though they have repented.

Jonah thought more of his **pride**, his **prestige**, his **personal comfort**, than he did of the **perishing souls** of men. How cruel, cold and callous is the proud, arrogant, selfish character of the flesh - the very nature of Adam.

The flesh in you and me is no different than the flesh that was in Jonah. It stands here in sharp relief because of the extreme magnitude of Jonah's situation.. For when we put our own comfort and luxury before the spiritual needs of the multitudes that are perishing around us, we are just as guilty as he was. When we are content to know that we and our children are saved and refuse to share the gospel with others. we stand condemned, just as he did. O that God may open our eyes, that He might strip away the religious veneer, that He might show us what we really are, or rather what the flesh in us is.

4:11 *"And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"*

God used this situation to show Jonah the unreasonable character of his pride and selfishness. Jonah wanted God to destroy a great city in which there were 120,000 innocent little children, who could not tell *"their right hand from their left hand,"* just so that he might have the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so", knowing that he had been exonerated, and that his prestige as a prophet might be maintained.

Here Jonah ends his narrative, but I wonder what happened to him afterwards. He obviously did not die physically at the time, otherwise he could never have written this historical record for us to read. Did he return to his native city, Gath Hopher? Maybe, at least this manuscript found its way in to the hands of some Godly Jew. They must have seen its importance and value and had the scribes make many copies. God saw that it was preserved and included in the canon of Holy Scriptures so that you and I could be blessed, challenged and taught by it. It became one of those books of Holy Scripture which Paul affirmed were given by inspiration of God and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and for instruction in righteousness [2 Tim. 3:16-17].

If Jonah did return to Galilee, then it would seem that he afterwards came back to Nineveh to follow up the work of grace that God had begun. History and geography seem to support this because on a hill near to the ruins of Nineveh is a place claimed by the Arabs to be Jonah's tomb, and is revered by them as a holy place. If it is Jonah's tomb, then it means that he spent the rest of his life with these people and literally gave his life for them, ending his days far from his home and his people. There are some things we will never

know till we reach glory, but then we will know. How we should look forward to meeting this mighty Prophet whose life and example has been such a blessing to the people of God.

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One could spend a lifetime in the study of false religions and never come to an end of it. Let us rather come to know the Lord and His word so well that no false Christ can lead us astray.

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